

Town of Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Task Force

Meeting minutes

December 6, 2007

8:30 AM

Council Chambers, Municipal Building

93 Cottage Street, Bar Harbor

Members in attendance: Charlie Phippen, Nathan Young, Paul Paradis, George Seavey, Mary Opdyke, Amy Powers, Greg Veilleux, Robert Bahr, , Chris Fogg, Anne Krieg

Also in attendance was Liz Weston from Acadia National Park, Betty Massie of MDI Tours

Absent from the meeting was Fred Cook, and, Greg Gordon who was excused as he had notified the group of his vacation

The agenda was adopted.

The calendar was accepted with the following changes:

November 13 and December 11 would be the sole meeting dates for those respective months.

It was requested for staff to utilize the website for agendas and minutes and other documents prepared or received digitally.

Paul Paradis led a discussion on the table of priorities. Anne Krieg scribed the comments on a large tablet.

The Priorities are:

- ✓ *Parking and Queuing*
- ✓ *1 one motor coach routes*
- ✓ *Creation of another drop-off area for visitors in the downtown area*
- ✓ *Way-finding improvements*
- ✓ *Coordination with the Island Explorer*
- ✓ *Idling issues*
- ✓ *Passenger cap*
- ✓ *Fees*

After discussion of these items, the group decided:

- *Discussion of a possible passenger cap was the top priority. This discussion includes the influence of staffing needs, the season length, and the number of buses needed related to the number of passengers on board a ship.*
- *The second priority will be fees. In this discussion, there will be investigation into port development with a fee structure.*
- *Improving way-finding and possible other visitor service assistance is the third priority.*
- *The 4th priority is all remaining issues with buses.*

Many in the task force discussed the need to bring Ocean Properties to the group for discussion on their plans. Some in the group felt it was important to coordinate our efforts with their plans. Otherwise, the group will have to plan for possible public facilities without better knowledge of private service delivery in the future.

There was also dissention to this idea. Some felt that the task force needs to look at the long-term needs for the town with this use of the Pier and not necessarily the current intent of a private property owner.

Charlie Phippen indicated there may be issues with Ocean Properties building a facility on their private pier with the Army Corps of Engineers.

The group discussed the concept of a passenger cap. They thought it was important to analyze previous year's passenger numbers. Charlie indicated he would supply a packet of information on this item.

Amy Powers noted there are many influences as to whether a passenger disembarks for a visit or chooses to stay on the ship when in port. Influences include weather, activities the day prior, and the age of the passenger. It was questioned if an industry standard exists for the number of passengers that leave a ship. She cautioned that the using the capacity of the ship as to how many visitors come into Bar Harbor is not the whole story.

Liz Weston from Acadia National Park spoke about another influence on cruise ship visitation. There is a capacity issue within the Park, she noted. She also told the group that there is no more parking to be built in the Park, according to the 2000 Park Plan. It was requested from the group that the Park bring information to the group to assist them.

The group discussed the documents from Juneau Alaska, which is an agreement on management of cruise ships. Some members did not see a connection to the Town of Bar Harbor with this. Amy Powers felt it was a mechanism to assist with negotiations between the town and the industry. It was generally felt that the concept might be good but it would be an item taken up after decisions on management were made and recommended by the Task Force to the Town Council.

Amy Powers reviewed a recent law that was filed within the Passenger Vessels Act. There was discussion on the proposal and it was decided the Task Force could not comment as a group but if CruiseMaine wanted the Town to comment, then it would have to come from the Town Council.

The Chair indicated he will provide a short verbal report to the Town Council at their December 18, 2007 meeting.

The Chair opened the meeting up to public comment.

Liz Weston from Acadia National Park questioned the basis for which fees will be set.

Charlie reviewed some of the past fee comparison studies he has. It was requested the Task Force be provided with that work.

Cynthia from Destination New England questioned if fees would be applied to the other bus companies not related to the cruise ship industry. She expressed great concern with the process, that the Task Force may not have the information they need and that the fees may go too far.

Chief Young and Anne Krieg both noted that the purpose of the task force is that investigation to occur, and that any information available on any issue should be forwarded to the task force through the staff in the Planning Department.

Amy Powers expressed concern on meeting twice a month, given the weather in the winter and efficiency of the meetings. She felt that longer meetings once a month might be a better choice. No action was taken.

The group outlined with Charlie the requested information related to history of ships' visits, projections for 2008 and 2009, an accounting of the buses, the bus procedures and other previously noted items.

The packet delivery was briefly discussed. Greg Veilleux and Paul Paradis will receive their packets in the Council packets the Friday before a meeting. Chris Fogg and Amy Powers requested their packet to be mailed; staff can receive theirs by internal mail. Other members of the group may either pick up their packets on Friday before a meeting or they will be mailed that Friday afternoon.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 AM.

Minutes prepared by Anne Krieg, Planning Director